

LOUISVILLE HISTORIAN
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THE MUSEUM CORNER

We were all saddened and shocked after the death of our friend and president, Eileen Schmidt, on February 4, 1998 following complications after open-heart surgery. Don Ross has assumed her position on the Commission and Virginia Caranci has been re-appointed to fill his term.

A wall featuring Eileen's picture and name has been suggested in her memory.

Grace Dalby has offered her services and those of a life-long friend in identifying old buildings and other pertinent information about Louisville.

Sara Godshalk, our liaison with the City, will be assuming a new position and a new facilitator is to be named at a later date. We shall miss Sara. She has been reliable and hard-working in matters concerning the Commission.

A metal icebox has been donated by the Biellas. A search is on-going for a hand pump to be placed outside the museum house. We are all in agreement that an additional structure is needed to display artifacts and provide space for a work area.

The annual Society meeting will take place on May 17, 1998 at the museum from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. We will feature a presentation of old time slides and interviews and free calendars will be handed out to those on a first come basis. All are invited and welcome to attend.

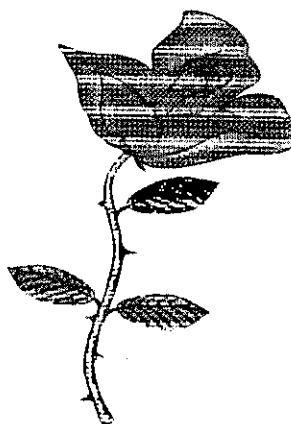
The Taste of Louisville will be held on June 13, 1998. The museum will be open from 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. that afternoon. We are hoping for a good turnout again this year!

IN MEMORY OF
EILEEN SCHMIDT
AND
OLIVIA ZARINA

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EILEEN

One of the first memories I have of my mother is laying on her bed in the afternoon, while she taught me to read the simple words in the "See Spot Run" book.

One of the last memories I have of my mother is her reading to my 1-year-old daughter in a lounge at University Hospital in Denver, while she awaited her second heart bypass surgery.

Mother, grandmother, teacher, historian, wife, homemaker, librarian, friend and Louisville native — Eileen Schmidt was a presence in this community who will long be remembered for her many contributions.

At the age of 70, Eileen died Feb. 4 after complications from heart surgery. She was diagnosed with advanced heart disease in 1994, and underwent a triple bypass surgery. After four years of living, traveling and spending much of her free time as president of the Louisville Historical Commission, Eileen's symptoms returned in December and surgery was again recommended. She lived 24 hours after the surgery was completed.

Her death leaves a void in the archives of Louisville history, much of which she was able to store in her head, complete with facts, dates, and anecdotes about the development of the city and its many longtime residents. Eileen Harris was born in Louisville July 23, 1927, in her mother's tiny home at the corner of Spruce Street and Lafarge. She spent her childhood in the same house, living next door to her grandparents and within blocks of many

aunts and uncles, who had all migrated from Italy earlier in the century.

Scarlet and rheumatic fever nearly took Eileen's life at the age of 8, and she spent more than a year confined to her bed. Bored and immobile, Eileen turned to books to occupy much of her time, and developed a love of reading that would carry through her life.

Her passion for history also developed early in life. In addition to her eagerness to study history in school, Eileen loved to sit and listen to the stories of her grandfather, aunts and uncles about their families, their lives in Italy and their migration to America.

Eileen's paternal grandparents also had a rich history, and she was equally interested in learning about their lives.

On May 8, 1949, Eileen married Albert Schmidt at St. Louis Catholic Church in Louisville. Except for five years spent living in Colorado Springs, the couple made their home in Louisville and raised their four children here.

In 1972, Eileen began working part-time at the Louisville Public Library as an assistant librarian. She took great joy in previewing books and conducting a weekly story hour for small children.

But probably just as rewarding about her job was the extensive contact she had with people. Eileen always had time to chat with library patrons, and as her family used to joke, knew each one's life history. She would work at the library 15 years.

In approximately 1983, Eileen was appointed to the newly formed Louisville Historical Commission. She and other commission members successfully opened two buildings to be used as museums, and began archiving artifacts and historical sites in and around Louisville.

Eileen took over as president of the commission in 1994. She was instrumental in listing many historic sites on local and national registries, was active in fund raising for the commission, spent hundreds of hours cataloging artifacts at the museum and put out the commission's newsletter each quarter nearly single-handedly.

A noted expert in local history, Eileen received hundreds of inquiries from businesses, newspapers, former residents and other historians about Louisville. Most recently, she helped save the Martinez memorial south of Louisville from destruction by developers and was helping to preserve the Mayhoffer home on the old cemetery road.

Friends, relatives and acquaintances have donated more than \$2,000 to the historical commission in Eileen's name since her death.

On behalf of Eileen's family, I want to thank everyone who has sent donations, prayers, masses and cards since mom's death. It's comforting to know so many will miss her and recognize her valuable contributions to the community.

Theresa Myers, a freelance writer living in Greeley, Colo., is the youngest of Eileen Schmidt's four children.

MARGARET TOBIN BROWN

With all of the recent publicity surrounding the sinking of the Titanic we thought it might be interesting to share some facts on the "Unsinkable Molly Brown." The following information was taken from The Early Years of Colorado by Rene Coquoz.

In July, 1876, Margaret Tobin was born in Hannibal, Missouri. As a young child she was named Maggie, a name she always kept. She had a large muscular frame and was a tomboy defending herself against all of her peers and was always a leader.

In 1883, Maggie moved to Leadville, Colorado, in the company of her younger and much smaller brother. She then started working as a saleslady for Daniels and Fisher and Smith Dry Goods Store.

On September 27, 1855, James J. Brown was born in Wayne County, Pennsylvania. He moved to Colorado in 1880 and was employed in the mines in Aspen. He was enthralled with the stories of Leadville and its mines and moved there in 1883. He then became affiliated with the Maid and Henriette Mines which were operated by Eben Smith and David H. Moffat. James attracted the attention of Mr. Smith and was made a shift foreman for two years and was then promoted to be in charge of operations as superintendent of the Maid and Henriette Mines.

Every morning and evening as James went to and from the mines he noticed and was attracted to Miss Tobin. This eventually led to courtship and engagement of the young couple. They were married September 1, 1886, at the Annunciation Church in Leadville. They had a short honeymoon at Evergreen Lakes and lived in Leadville and then to Stumptown so Jim could be closer to his work.

In 1890, the Little Jonny Mine captured J. J. Brown's interest and several years later he and other owners purchased 150 acres of adjoining property. It was after this investment that the Brown's became millionaires.

In 1896 the Browns moved to Denver and built a beautiful home on Capitol Hill where they had two children, Lawrence and Helen. Mrs. Brown was continually snubbed by society circles because of her lack of education and her unpolished English. She had beautiful clothes, but because of her size was not considered to be well-dressed. She had a quick Irish temper and often swore but was a kind and gentle person.

The Brown's had many arguments concerning Maggie's desire to be a part of society. Because of this, Jim left her and returned to Leadville. In 1912, he had all but retired from the mining industry but continued to have interest in the Ibex. He passed away at his daughter's home in Long Island on September 5, 1922.

Mrs. Brown did quite a bit of traveling and in 1912 booked passage on the maiden voyage of the Titanic to America from England where she had enrolled her daughter in a school. On April 14, 1912, at 11:45 p.m. the huge liner ran into a floating iceberg and because of her heroism became

known as the "Unsinkable Molly Brown."

She took voice lessons during her trips to Europe and managed to master several languages.

She also shared stories that she had had several close calls from "watery graves." As a small girl in Mississippi she was on a small boat when a cyclone struck. She ended up on a small island close to a men's club where Mark Twain was a member. He was a friend of the family and he wondered what would happen to her next. The next brush with death was when she was aboard a large liner named the Vaterland which ran into a typhoon, the third was the Titanic, and the fourth encounter four years after the Titanic tragedy aboard a liner that was torpedoed.

Mrs. Brown died in 1931 with no warning even though she had suffered two paralytic strokes.

The Leadville Herald Democrat had the following editorial: "A limited acquaintance with Mrs. Brown leads to the impression that she was a picturesque and imaginative lady able to gratify many whims and many fancies, but who certainly in her early career did not burn up \$300,000 of her husbands money by carelessly lighting a fire in a stove where the securities were hidden. We like to remember her as a woman whose heart turned to Leadville in her late years, who brought up and educated the orphan children of her brother, Dan, who sent Christmas gifts to the children of this city where her husband made a small fortune, and who provided funds for the restoration of the Eugene Field Home in Denver."

FERGUSON FAMILY HISTORY

The tombstone in the Louisville cemetery reads: James R. Ferguson--Born 1835 - Died 1892. Jane B., Wife - Born 1839 - Died 1911. Yet, if it could speak about its occupants, there would be stories to tell.

The union of these two souls, begun in Edinburgh, Scotland, has now produced the sixth generation of Fergusons here in Louisville.

James and Jane emigrated to Illinois with their son Robert. It was there that Jane McClearn Boyd and Robert met and married. Her parents with their thirteen children also came from Edinburgh. Jane's father was less than fascinated with the United States so he returned to Scotland, never to come back. His wife stayed and lived with one of her sons in Joliet, Illinois.

Robert and Jane had one son, William Boyd, who was four years old in 1904 when they moved into their Lincoln Street home where Bill lived until his death.

Coal mining was the occupation of both Robert and Bill. In his quaint Scottish brogue, which he spoke until his death, Robert told stories of how he walked to and from Ward, a feat to be envied even in this day and age.

Jane died of cancer at age 68, but Robert lived until he was 87.

Bill married a hometown girl, Gertrude Dionigi, in 1923. They had one son, David.

Even though he only completed 10th grade, Bill went on to become president of Clayton Coal Company. The mines

were not always kind and took their ounce of flesh. In 1928, Bill lost the sight in one eye, and in 1946, he was buried in an accident which took the life of his companion working at his side. Almost every bone in his body was broken. G. R. Henning, who was the local mortician, also provided ambulance service. After taking Bill to St. Joseph's Hospital in Denver, he patiently sat in the hall for hours waiting to take the body back to the mortuary. Bill surprised everyone and fought his way back even though it took four months, most of which was spent in intensive care.

Four years went by before he was able to work again, but he continued to mine until past his 69th birthday. He spent his retirement years fishing and gardening. Bill pass

During the time that Bill was unable to work, their son Dave, who was only in high school, worked odd jobs delivering groceries, cleaning ashpits, etc., to help with the living expenses.

After graduating from high school, Dave joined the Marines. Ironically, his service time was between World War II and the Korean Conflict.

Upon returning home, Dave entered college and received his teaching degree from the University of Northern Colorado. He married Dorothy Anne La Salle in 1951.

As Dow Chemical, Rocky Flats, was just starting up, financial opportunities were much better there than in teaching, so Dave went to work for Dow. After a number of years with Dow, he decided he really wanted to contribute more of himself by going into teaching. He spent 27 years working with the under-privileged young people at Cole Junior High and Manual High School in Denver.

Dave had a harrowing experience while on a rescue mission with the Louisville Fire Department. While looking for a downed plane carrying six Louisville men, his plane crashed. Dave was awarded a plaque for being "Hero of the Year in Colorado" for rescuing the pilot and carrying him ten mountain miles to safety. According to reports, the pilot could not have survived the night without medical help, although he did lose an eye.

There were six children born to Dave and Dorothy: Dan, Dave, Dean, Doreen, Doug, and Dale. All but the youngest are married and have added twelve new names to the Ferguson legacy.

Anyone interested in submitting their own family history is welcome to do so. Please mail them to the Historical Commission, 749 Main Street, Louisville, CO 80027. We will put them on file for future publication in this newsletter.

GHOST TOWN

Many people are intrigued and interested in ghost towns. There are many in Colorado, but one that may be of particular interest because of its close proximity to Louisville and its mining background is Sunset. To get there you travel up Boulder Canyon about a mile. At the Gold Hill sign, turn north (right) and drive through Crisman to

Salina. At this point the road divides. Keep left through Wall Street to the ghost town of Sunset. There are remains of a few buildings, but most of the town is gone now.

In 1884, a small amount of mining in Four Mile Canyon brought people into the area and warranted the building of a village post office. Mail was routed from Boulder. The Free Coinage Mine had investors like The Honorable John L. Routt, last Territorial Governor and first Governor of the new State of Colorado. Two other worthy properties were the Poor Woman, and the Scandia Mine which was located on a hillside above the town.

Some people might like to visualize ghost towns that were most famous like Dodge City, Leadville, or Deadwood, where a gunfight was not an uncommon event and brothels were found on every street corner. Actually, most were small quiet towns like Sunset. One hotel, the Columbine, occupied the streets. There were three general merchandise stores and a meat and provisions store. It was lucky that the town was built on the existing line of the Greeley, Salt Lake and Pacific Railroad.

Statistics published in the Colorado Business Directory gives us some idea of how the population fluctuated in Sunset. In 1890, forty residents lived in town. In 1894, this moved up to 175 and the directory showed this number again in 1897. After the turn of the century, the population again fell to 75. In 1921, the last year statistics were taken, the population had again dropped to a mere 30 people. Sunset's highest level of development occurred in the 80's as would be expected if you look at these numbers.

The benefits gained from the railroad that ran through the town were immense. Many people spent time sight-seeing on the railroad in those days. There were loop excursions that brought large numbers of people into Four Mile Canyon, around the hills and into the mining communities. However, the three railroad companies, the Greeley, Salt Lake, and Pacific could not pay their way. The Union Pacific also attempted to operate the road but made no profit. Unfortunately, on May 30, 1984, torrential rains fell in the mountains and canyons west of Boulder, and the tracks were washed away. The Union Pacific pulled out when it believed it would be faced with more debt.

Following this, two Pennsylvanians, W. J. Culbertson and Colonel Sam Dick, purchased and repaired the old right-of-way. In 1897, they were building the Colorado and Northwestern Railway. This was a mining railroad. There were also five others who invested in this venture. All seven men owned all of the stock. There are two conflicting dates as to when the railroad opened up one being that same year, 1897 the other saying January, 1898. This was a highly scenic route and was called the "Switzerland Trail" or the "Whiplash Route."

For many years following, the Columbine Hotel operated at its highest level accommodating fifty persons at a time for meals while the train ran. For the investors, tourism became quite profitable and by the following July, the tracks ran into Ward.

For the most part, the original grades have become roads. From Boulder, the tracks went up Boulder Canyon, to Four Mile Canyon. Trains passed through Crisman, Salina, and Wall Street before ending up in Sunset. The road divided here. A right fork went up the hill to Mt. Alto, with its beautiful fountain, hotel, picnic ground, and dance hall. The tracks then went on to Ward. On the left branch from Sunset, the tracks went up the steep face of Sugarloaf Mountain to the town of Sugarloaf. The tracks were then built to the west along a ridge past Glacier Lake before going down into Cardinal. The tracks reached Eldora in 1904 and started operating on January 1, 1905.

In March of 1909, the company went into receivership and a reorganization and was named the Denver, Boulder, and Western Railway.

Another cloudburst in 1919 forced the whole operation to be abandoned.

Both of the original railroad grades are passable except in the winter and can be quite breathtaking and beautiful for those who enjoy back country sight-seeing.



MAY DAY CELEBRATIONS

From April 28 to May 3 the ancient Romans observe Flora, the goddess of flowers, by having games using blossoms in processions and

dances. Everyone went into the field and picked wild flowers. Lovers brought back floral boughs to put them in the houses of the one they loved, while some young men raced to see who could be first to crown Flora's statue with a wreath.

Roman slaves were allowed to say and do as they wanted on May Day only having to return to their masters that evening.

Some people have traced our May Day rites back to the Druids, who worshiped the sun. On hilltops they lit fires to honor the sun and was also associated with human sacrifices.

Peasants in Sweden, Czechoslovakia, Finland, and some other European countries made bonfires to celebrate the return of light after the long winter. Some believed that these fires would drive the witches away from their ceremonies. Often, men would jump over the fires or drive cattle between them. During the medieval period, May Day was one of the most important holidays of the year rejoicing in the onset of spring. On May 1st, rich and poor, young and old, went "a-maying"—to gather great boughs of hawthorn.

These rites began before sunrise and upon returning home there was singing accompanied by horns and the tabor. Wreaths and garlands of the May were made by people and used to decorate their homes.

Surprisingly, the King even mingled with the

asants on May Day.

In the early morning hours of this holiday, many women went where no one could see them to bathe their faces in the dew, thinking this would improve their complexions.

In an English village when the people had assembled the "may", they congregated at the green. A May Queen was chosen accompanied by several attendants where they sat in a bower covered with flowers and greenery.

Many kinds of contests, sports and races took place on the village green before the May Queen. There were jesters and dancers performing in elaborate costumes. The onlookers also enjoyed archery contests. Special May Day carols were sung about the coming of spring. Children might be carrying a doll dressed in white--"The Lady of the May"--and they would sing and give flowers away and in return were given small gifts.

A Maypole was also decorated with colored ribbons, wreaths, branches, and garlands. Sometimes eight oxen brought in the pole. It was often a birch tree. To the Puritans, Maypoles were eyesores around which people act as heathens. There was competition between towns to see who might have the tallest pole. If evil spirits were thought to be lurking around, a maypole would be set up in front of a church. It was thought that the pole would prevent such spirits from entering the holy building.

The pole usually just stood for May Day, however, some towns had them permanently erected.

Of course, the Puritans were adamantly against this and were able to put an end to it. On April 6, 1644, Parliament declared:

The Lords and Commons do further order and ordain that all and singular Maypoles that are, or shall be erected, shall be taken down and removed by the constables, tithing men, petter constables, and churchwardens of the parishes, where the same be, and that no Maypole be hereafter set up, erected, or suffered to be set up within this Kingdom of England...the said officers to be fined 5 shillings weekly until the said Maypoles be taken down.

After the return of the Stuarts, Maypoles were set up again although the revelry was more restrained.

Upon the return of Charles II to London in 1661, a 134 foot pole, the tallest ever seen in the city, was brought from Scotland Yard by 12 seamen. It was decorated with three gilt crowns, "streamers, flags, garlands of flowers, and other ornaments," and quickly became the main topic of town.

When this pole decayed in 1717, Sir Isaac Newton bought it and set it up in a park in Essex. It was used to support a 124-foot telescope.

Washington Irving (1783-1859) while visiting England wrote:

I shall never forget the delight I felt on first seeing a Maypole. It was on the banks of the Dee, close to the picturesque old bridge that stretches across the river from the quaint little city of Chester...The mere sight of this Maypole gave a glow to my feelings and

spread a charm over the country for the rest of the day...One can readily imagine what a gay scene it must have been in jolly old London, when the doors were decorated with flowering branches, when every hat was decked with hawthorn, and Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, Maid Marian, and the morris dancers and all the other fantastic maskers and revelers were performing their antics about the Maypole, in every part of the city.

When the pilgrims reached America they found a flower which they called "Mayflower."

The Puritans brought their dislike of May Day with them to America.

A custom which came from Great Britain and still exists this day is that of giving may baskets. It was customary to hang flower-filled baskets on doorknobs on the evening of May Day and call out, "May basket!" The idea was to get away without being discovered. (It stemmed from the old belief that it kept evil spirits away.)

This custom seemed to die out for some time but was later revived by schools where children made their baskets and filled with flowers, trinkets, or whatever they wanted and hung them on the doors of loved ones.

In the 1960's, schools often observed this day by choosing a May Queen, setting up Maypoles and letting the children decorate them. They often danced around the poles. May Day was welcomed with "dancing on the green," the dances including old numbers like the English Ribbon Dance.

Clubs and churches often staged musical pageants with young actors and actresses. Such plays as "The Enchanted Garden" or "The Princess and the Players" were presented before the May queen and her court.

In Hawaii, May Day was observed as Lei Day, one of the most fragrant and colorful celebrations of the world. Each island has its own special kind of lei. They are made from such flowers as orchids, carnations, ginger, tuberose, or bougainvillea. A small lei of orchids might have had as many as three hundred flowers on it.

When people leave the islands by ship, they are expected to wear the lei until the vessel rounds Diamond Head where they are supposed to throw the lei into the sea. If the flowers float back to shore, the wearer will also return.

For many countries May Day is not a time for merry-making. It is a day devoted to workingmen and their careers. Some foreign labor organizations observed May 1st as symbolic of "the international solidarity of workingmen." Some observed it in memory of the eight-hour day that came into being in 1866.

In Moscow, the Russians would put on a great show of military might on May 1st; however, this was down-played and they now emphasize sports.

The American Bar Association used to sponsor "Law Day" on May 1st.

In 1961, President Kennedy asked all Americans to display the flag and to observe the date "with suitable

ceremonies."

In Louisville schools, May Day was celebrated in much the same manner as described earlier. Great efforts were put into making elaborate May baskets which were filled with flowers, pictures, candy, and whatever else the child might think its recipient would enjoy. This basket was set upon a porch or hung upon a doorknob where the child would then ring the doorbell and run away as fast as they could so that the receiving party would not see them.

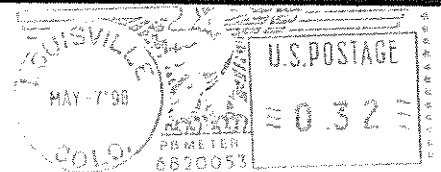
Maypoles were often decorated with crepe paper hanging so that several children could hold onto a piece and dance around it.

"It is the day of all the year,
Of all the year the one day
When I shall see my mother dear
And bring her cheer,
A-mothering on Sunday."

(Taken from All About American Holidays, by Maymie R. Krythe)

HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY!

Louisville Historical Commission
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